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ABSTRACT

In early 1983, a questionnaire was sent to members of the Public Relations Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication to determine whether they perceived the role of public relations practitioners to be one of four types: expert prescriber, communication technician, communication facilitator, or problem solving process facilitator. Responses indicated that, overall, the communication-technician role, with a focus on writing and producing messages, stood out as quite distinct from other roles. However, the dominant role-orientation factor, called "decision-making," combined elements from the roles of problem solving process facilitation, communication process facilitation, and expert prescriber. Some communication-technician-oriented educators appeared to stress the physical production of messages, while others focused on writing, planning and media relations broadly defined. Overall, educators showed a strong felt need to train generalists for public relations careers.(HOD)

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Public Relations Practitioner Roles -- Their Meanings for Educators

by

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This paper was presented to the Public Relations Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Memphis, Tennessee, August 5, 1985. The author acknowledges the valuable advice and assistance of Dr. Glen Broom.

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ABSTRACT: "Public Relations Practitioner Roles -- Their Meanings for Educators"
by Hugh M. Culbertson, for presentation to Public Relations Division, AEJMC, Memphis, Tennessee, August 5, 1985

In early 1983, a questionnaire was sent to members of the Public Relations Division, AEJMC. A total of 163 responses resulted from two mailings, representing a response rate of 73 percent.

Respondents indicated their orientations toward four roles identified in previous research by Broom and colleagues. Also, they reported actual emphasis which they devoted in teaching to 35 topics and emphasis which, ideally, they would place on 10 topic areas gleaned from a previous content analysis of public relations literature.

Overall, the communication-technician role, with a focus on writing and producing messages, stood out as quite distinct from other roles. However, the dominant role-orientation factor, called decision-making, combined elements from three previously identified practitioner roles. These were problem-solving process facilitation, communication process facilitation, and expert prescriber.

Some comm.-technician-oriented educators appeared to stress the physical production of messages, while others focused on writing, planning and media relations broadly defined.

Overall, educators showed a strong felt need to train generalists for public relations careers. While seen as distinctive, even the comm.-technician role-orientation correlated positively with salience accorded to management and the behavioral sciences. In short, there appeared to be no real division among PR educators akin to the oft-noted "green eye-shades vs. chi-squares' split among journalism professors of some years ago.

For at least 20 years, debates have raged on the breadth or narrowness of the public relations function. Are practitioners (or should they be) writing, editing and message-production specialists? Or do and should they also help set policy and interpret a client's social, political, economic and geographic contexts? Are PR departments legitimately concerned only with speaking to publics? Or does their role encompass listening to and interpreting what publics have to say? These are among the issues often raised. (Pimlott, 1965, pp. 17-34; Yutzy and Williams, 1965, pp. 35-50).

While the literature has suggested various ideal answers to such questions, researchers have just begun probing how practitioners, educators and others define the ideal or actual PR function. Drawing on the literature of counseling, Broom and his colleagues have identified at least four roles which public relations people apparently tend to play:

1. Expert prescriber. Such a practitioner is defined by top managers as authorities on PR problems and their solutions. He or she defines and researches problems, develops programs, and takes major responsibility for implementation.

2. Communication technician. The primary concern here is with proposing and producing public relations materials--writing, editing and working with the media. Emphasis is on communication and journalistic skills.

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3. Communication facilitator. This role involves acting as a liaison, interpreter and mediator between an organization and its publics, with emphasis on maintaining a continuous flow of two-way communication. A major concern is with removing barriers to information exchange and keeping channels open.

4. Problem-solving process facilitator. The point here is to guide managers and the organization through a rational problem-solving process in planning and programming. Practitioners also strive to maintain management involvement in implementation (Acharya, 1981; Broom and Smith, 1979; Johnson and Acharya, 1982).

This study sought to learn whether such roles have meaning to PR educators. To be sure, most professors presumably do not enact PR-practitioner roles day in and day out. However, a thoughtful academician seems apt to consider, at least on occasion, the kinds of activity which students in the field must prepare for. Further, professorial views may both reflect and influence the thinking of young practitioners--and the profession's present and future direction.

The study had three basic aims.

First, we examined topic priorities of educators as a function of background--job experience, age, education, etc. Past research has given little attention to PR educators' academic priorities.

Second, we sought to find out whether role-orientations of the type discovered by Broom and colleagues had meaning to educators--and if role items cluster differently for them than for practitioners in multivariate analysis.

Third, we investigated whether role-orientations predict what professors say they actually emphasize in the classroom--and what they'd like to see emphasized in the field as a whole.

Hypotheses

Four hypotheses and one research question guided the analysis. The hypotheses stemmed from an overview of literature on public relations and journalism education. The exploratory research question had no clear basis in the literature.

Hypothesis 1. Emphasis which educators place on behaviors connected with the communication-technician role correlates little or not at all with that attached to the other three roles--expert prescriber, communication facilitator, and problem-solving process facilitator. On the other hand, these latter roles tend to overlap and merge as revealed in factor analysis of importance ratings attached to specific behaviors.

Research on practitioners strongly suggests a division of labor between communication technicians and those who stress other public relations roles. In Broom's (1982a) study of 458 PRSA members, correlations between emphasis on communication technician and that of the other three roles fell in the range of only .12 to .24. Also, women tended to act as communication technicians, playing the other three roles less often than men. Influenced by their own backgrounds in public relations and their study of the field as it is, professors might be expected to mirror such a division.

Also, Broom's work on practitioners has revealed high correlations (in the range of .73 to .84) among frequency ratings for playing the communication-facilitator, problem-solving process facilitator and expert-prescriber roles (Broom, 1982a). Of course, this doesn't establish that the three roles require the same behaviors and capabilities. Rather, it seems likely that public relations managers play all three roles to a degree. These roles all seem necessary for overall organizational functioning.

In addition, academicians might be influenced in this direction by recent developments in public relations theory. These developments (Grunig, 1983, 1984; Ferguson, 1984) build on general-systems (Kuhn, 1974) and organizational (Hage, 1980) theory. Emphasis is placed on:

1. Interdependency of phenomena at varying positions on a micro-macro continuum.

2. Interdependence between processes within a system and those external to it. Relevant here is the notion of boundary spanning emphasized by Ferguson (1984).

Such an intellectual base seemingly implies interdependence among the three "non-communication technician" roles. After all, the role of problem-solving process facilitator focuses on internal functioning of an organization. That of communication facilitator hinges on relating to external systems via liaison with the media, mediation between organizations and their publics, and boundary spanning. And the expert prescriber must define problems with reference to both internal and external communication.

Hypothesis 2. Analysis of behaviors and educational topics stressed suggests the existence of two distinct if latent communication-technician subroles:

1. That of a pure production technician who pays attention almost exclusively to the art and mechanics of message production. For example, a publication editor often processes others' copy and works on layout, design, printing specifications and other production mechanics. Educators and practitioners with such a bent may have little concern with audience definition or with planning of a total public relations campaign or program.

2. A communicator planner who deals with campaign planning and the study of media uses and techniques. Such a person might still qualify as a fairly strict communication technician--avoiding concerns for two-way communication between client and public, processes within an organization, and broad organizational policy-making.

The first of these viewpoints seems central to courses in news reporting, editing, layout and design, publicity writing and methods, and allied topics. The continuing importance of these topics in PR education is suggested by the recent publication of several texts and workbooks in media writing and publicity techniques (Douglas, 1980; Newsom and Siegfried, 1981; Newsom and Wollert, 1985; and Simon, 1978).

The "communication planner" might stress courses in public relations principles, campaign management and case analysis. Several contemporary texts focus on these areas (Center and Walsh, 1985; Sietel, 1984; and Simon, 1980). Only recently have newer editions of

basic texts (Cutlip, Center and Broom, 1985; Grunig and Hunt, 1984; and Newsom and Scott, 1985) begun placing emphasis on two-way communication comparable to that on message production and sending.

In light of these developments, one would expect some educators to view the communication-technician role more broadly than do others. Of course, these distinctions seem rather subtle--with few people expected to embrace a narrow or broad view solely and to the exclusion of the other.

The next two hypotheses focus on possible factors in educators' experience which might relate to differing emphases in teaching.

Hypothesis 3. The greater one's level of education, the more emphasis he/she places on behavioral-science concepts in teaching.

The rationale here is that, according to a curriculum analysis (Walker, 1981) and a survey of priority research questions (McElreath, 1980), PR-related graduate study has stressed the social sciences. In fact, less than 10 percent of the respondents here majored in "non-behavioral" areas such as law and English while earning their most advanced degrees.

As a corollary, we would not expect education level to correlate strongly with emphasis on decision-making processes, management and journalistic skills. These expectations stem from evidence that:

1. Most educators in public relations have earned their graduate degrees in journalism and mass communication. As noted later, 64 percent of those responding here had done so, compared with 60 percent in Walker's (1981) study.

2. Graduate education in journalism and mass communication often places low emphasis on journalistic skills. In a survey by Ryan (1980, p. 11) less than 10 percent of 71 programs required courses in newswriting, editing or reporting of public affairs. In contrast, 61 percent required research methods, 31 percent communication theory.

3. Historically, and perhaps to the present time, research and theory in mass communication have stemmed largely from social-psychological theory and method--not from work in management or organizational decision-making (Lowery and De Fleur, 1983).

Hypothesis 4. Public relations experience correlates positively with emphasis placed on public relations management, organizational processes and PR history/ethics.

As one gains experience and stature in the field, involvement in management and organizational process would increase. Further, one should come to realize that status as part of a "management team" is necessary if one is to have input at the policy level and avoid the "brush-fire" syndrome often said to hamper public relations performance (Newsom and Scott, 1985, pp. 66-68).

Research question 1 asks to what extent educators believe in emphasis on varied public relations roles, skills and behaviors. Also, does belief in any particular role or role cluster correlate especially strongly with emphasis on given topics in teaching?

The focus here is on the extent to which educators see young practitioners as generalists. As noted earlier, recent theory suggests a need for such a generalist view. Further, recent texts suggest that the PR function is and should be very broad (Grunig and

Hunt, 1984, pp. 90-91; Newsom and Scott, 1985, pp. 15-17). Perhaps, it is implied, the practitioner has importance partly because, in an age of specialization, he/she has some knowledge of what both an organization's left and right hands are doing, and why.

Methodology

Sampling

In early 1983, a membership list of the Public Relations Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, was obtained. This division includes an active, varied group of educators as reflected in recent growth of its annual convention programs.

Non-university organizational members (for example, the U. S. Army Defense Information School) were deleted, as were all nine individuals with addresses outside of North America. Such a small subsample, if studied, would not allow assessment of varied PR functions, contexts and backgrounds throughout the world.

Questionnaires were mailed on April 18, along with a cover letter and pre-paid, self-addressed return envelope, to the remaining 222 PR Division members. The cover letter guaranteed anonymity and noted that the study grew in part from a discussion of a possible book on theory in public relations at the 1982 AEJMC convention. It also promised that members would learn of results later. Those not teaching public relations at the time of the study were asked to "respond in terms of your current thinking or, where needed, of your beliefs and practices when you last taught in the field."

A second wave of questionnaires went out, with a revised cover letter, on May 5, 1983. In all, 105 people responded to the first wave and 58 to the second, yielding 163 useable questionnaires and a response rate of 73 percent. There were no substantial differences between the two waves, suggesting non-response bias was slight.

Operational Definitions

Descriptive variables. Respondents checked level of education completed (earned doctorate, work beyond master's degree, master's degree, work beyond bachelor's, bachelor's degree). They also checked the disciplines in which they had majored while earning their highest degrees.

A question was asked about membership and accreditation status in the Public Relations Society of America and the International Association of Business Communicators, along with membership in other PR organizations. And educators indicated on a five-point scale (see table 1) their relative emphasis on graduate and undergraduate teaching.

Age was requested. And the questionnaire asked for estimates of job experience--to the nearest one-half year--in several media writing and editing capacities and in four facets of public relations (agency, corporate, non-profit, and trade, professional or producer-association).

Items on educator priorities in PR teaching got at three sets of variables.

Role-orientation -- Twenty items used by Broom (1982b) in previous work on practitioners were re-worded slightly. In the earlier work, each item had been a declarative statement, summarizing an activity (for example, I make the communication policy decisions.) and asking for a rating (on a scale from 1=never to 7=always) of frequency of carrying out that behavior. Here the "I" was removed from the beginning of the sentence, and instructions were as follows:

> Below are 20 activities and responsibilities which public relations practitioners are said to deal with at times. We'd like you to consider these in relation to the students you now teach who plan to seek careers in public relations. Indicate the amount of emphasis which you place, in the public relations courses which you teach, on preparing students to carry out each activity or assume each responsibility listed.
>
> If you place no emphasis at all on a certain area, circle no. 1.
>
> If your level of emphasis is extremely high, circle no. 7.
>
> If your estimate falls between these extremes, circle the number which seems appropriate.

Five of the items had been used to tap each of the four above-mentioned roles in previous studies. In the present analysis, 17 items survived factor analysis and are included in table 3.

Actual teaching topics. Fifteen varied topics covered in public relations courses, gleaned from textbooks and other literature, were presented. Respondents rated on a 4-point scale (from 1=no coverage to 4=high coverage) the emphasis which they placed on each topic in PR courses which they taught. Topics are listed in table 6. As reported later, factor analysis yielded four underlying dimensions.

Areas of ideal emphasis. Here each of nine broad topic areas was described. Educators rated each on a seven-point scale (from 1=of

very little importance to 7=extremely important) as to its importance in educating future practitioners.

After a capitalized label, a description of each topic area was provided. For example:

> PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES -- Describing PR practitioners as to background, place in the organizational hierarchies, opinions, attitudes and educational preparation. Definition of a profession, the extent to which practitioners qualify as professionals, and the importance of such questions. Service to society and non-partisan goals. The practitioner's responsibility with regard to fact and impression accuracy in communication. Situationism and absolutism as bases for ethical decision-making.

The nine areas of ideal emphasis are listed, with mean ratings, in table 7. The categories were developed from 10 in a recent content analysis by Broom, et al. (1982) of the Public Relations Journal and the Public Relations Review. That study sought to define focal points in the emerging PR field or discipline. Two alterations were made for the research here:

1. The three categories of professionalization, education and practitioners were combined into one based on the seeming interrelatedness of these areas and the lack of scholarly emphasis on the last two viewed separately.

2. The category of "program impact, effects and evaluation research" was split into two. One dealt with research methods and related issues, the other with research applications in assessing impact.

In light of conceptual distinctness of each category, no attempt was made at data reduction. All nine were treated separately in analyses.

Analysis

Separate factor analyses were done on items dealing with actual teaching topics and role orientations. Principal-axis solutions were followed by varimax rotations. On each set of items, factor analysis yielded four factors with eigenvalues of at least one.

To be retained in defining a factor, an item had to meet two conditions:

1. have a factor loading of at least .55 on that factor in a four-factor solution, with highest secondary loading of no more than .40 (or than .25 where the primary loading was below .60).
2. retain its primary loading on the same factor with a five-factor solution.

Partial correlation was used to achieve control where needed. Also, canonical correlation was employed to explore relations between the role-orientation and ideal-area item sets.

Findings

General description

Several interesting points show up in table 1 and other analyses.

Put table 1 about here.

First, sample members were rather young, with a mean age of 46.3 years and a median of 45. Fifty-five percent had earned doctorates, almost equal to the 54 percent in Albert Walker's 1981 survey of 132 PR educators. (Walker, 1981). Another 24 percent had no doctorates

but had taken academic work beyond the master's degree. Here, as in Walker's study, only three percent had not earned master's degrees.

Second, 64 percent of all respondents had earned their highest degrees in journalism/mass communication. This slightly exceeded Walker's (1982) figure of about 60 percent.

Third, one-third of those responding claimed to be accredited PRSA members. Twenty-six percent were non-accredited members, 42 percent non-members.

Fourth, faculty emphasis on graduate-level PR teaching was rather modest in light of Walker's (1982) finding that more than one-fourth of the programs which he examined had graduate-level PR sequences while another 12 percent had graduate PR majors. In the present study, only six percent of all respondents reported devoting more attention to graduate-level teaching than to undergrads. And only 12 percent stressed grad and undergrad teaching equally. Another 34 percent reported teaching primarily undergrads but some grads, while almost half (47 percent) taught undergrads only.

As one might expect, 60 percent of the non-Ph.D.'s but only 37 percent of the doctorate holders teach only undergrads. However, only 24 percent of the Ph.D.'s gave as much or more emphasis to grads than to undergrads.

Fifth, PR educators had substantial media and public relations experience, with means of 7.1 years in journalistic work and 7.6 years of PR experience. Median PR experience was about 5.1 years, with most of it coming in the non-profit and corporate sectors.

Hypothesis tests and analysis of indices

As shown in table 2, factor analysis of actual-emphasis ratings on specific course topics yielded four factors, each tapped by at least two items. These were:

1. Journalistic skills, covering PR writing, visual media, brochures and publication layout.

2. PR history, ethics and regulation, with one item covering each word after PR in the index's title.

3. PR management, encompassing budgeting and financial management as well as management of staff and human resources.

4. Behavioral science, dealing with social-science concepts and survey research methods.

Put table 2 about here.

Reliability was acceptable on the first two of these scales, with alpha coefficients of .78 on journalistic skills and .74 on PR history, ethics and regulation. With the other two dimensions, reliability was marginal--.57 for management of public relations, .63 for behavioral-science emphasis.

Table 3 reports factor-analytic data for role-orientation items, yielding four factors with eigenvalues of at least 1.00. Factor 3 is tapped by only one item and not measured reliably, ruling out further analysis.

As stated in hypothesis 1, the communication-technician factor has high, pure loadings with all five items derived from earlier study of practitioners. This result suggests some independence from the other factors analyzed.

Put table 3 about here.

Hypothesis 1 also specifies high correlations, as viewed by educators, among behaviors associated with other roles. The makeup of the decision-making factor supports this. This factor included:

1. Four of Broom's (1982) "problem-solving process facilitator" items (pointing out to management the need for systematic PR planning, acting as a catalyst, outlining alternative approaches to management, and helping managers go through defining problems, setting objectives and planning programs systematically).

2. Two items (keeping management informed of public relations, acting as a liaison between client and publics) tied previously to "communication process facilitation."

3. Two items from the "expert prescriber" concept (having broad experience so as to serve as an organization's PR expert, acting as an expert in diagnosing and solving PR problems).

Somewhat surprisingly, a separate factor labelled responsibility was defined by two items which fell on the "expert prescriber" dimension in studies of practitioners. Items here dealt with taking responsibility for PR success or failure and with being held accountable for it. Apparently educators saw a concern for status and accountability as somewhat distinct from other aspects of PR decision-making and implementation.

Reliability of these indices was acceptable, with alpha coefficients of .92 for decision-making, .85 for communication-technician, and .67 for the responsibility index.

Separate factor analyses of role-orientation items for those with doctorates and those without yielded some intriguing results which

must be seen as exploratory because of small subgroup n's. Specifically:

1. With each subgroup, most or all communication-technician items loaded clearly on a single factor not "shared" by other items.

2. Looking at those with Ph.D.'s, the factor accounting for the most variance was defined by all five of Broom's (1982) original "problem-solving process facilitator" items, four "communication-process facilitator" variables, and two scales thought to tap the "expert prescriber" concept. It would seem, then, that doctorate holders think of PR management largely in terms of organizational and communication process--with just a touch of traditional "expert prescriber" thrown in.

3. Turning to non-Ph.D.'s, the dominant factor was defined by four of Broom's "expert prescriber" items along with two "problem solving process facilitator" variables. We conjecture that, when academics without the doctorate look at managerial behavior in PR, they think largely in terms of the expert prescriber's tendency to define, research and solve a problem in rather traditional ways largely independent of behavioral research and theory.

Of course, these findings are at best suggestive. In sum, however, hypothesis 1 gained overall support. The communication-technician role seemed somewhat distinct from the other three, which tended to merge into two separate factors in the minds of educators. Summed communication-technician ratings correlated at .57 with "decision" orientation and .55 with "responsibility." While higher than comparable correlations among practitioners, these coefficients

fall below that of .79 between "decision" and "responsibility" here--and below the level ranging from .73 to .84 where practitioners rate behaviors associated with non-communication technician roles (Broom, 1982a).

Hypothesis 2 gains support from canonical correlation of role-orientation and ideal-topic ratings. Analysis yielded two canonical variates significant at .05.

Variate 1 denotes a narrow pure production technician viewpoint. The variable correlated positively and substantially with only one item--handling the technical aspects of producing public relations materials. Those scoring high on this dimension tended to downgrade broader aspects of message production (writing PR materials, writing and producing PR materials, and general study of media use and techniques).

Put table 4 about here.

Variates 1 and 2 both correlate negatively with operating as a catalyst in management's decision-making and with management planning and programming. Thus both concepts imply some downgrading of broader process-oriented concerns.

Variate 1, unlike no. 2, correlates negatively with acting as a liaison between management and various publics.

Variate 2 seems to suggest a broader communication planner role. High scorers here stress PR writing very mildly (loading=.20) and firmly embrace publication production (.46) and study of media uses and techniques (.52). As hypothesized, however, this breadth does not extend to process and decision-making items.

In sum, the data suggest at least a dim awareness among educators that technical aspects of message production and distribution are one thing, while planning, writing and coordination constitute a different realm of behaviors. Perhaps such a difference--encountered in curriculum planning, course design and textbook choice--is more salient to educators than to most practitioners.

Table 5 indicates support for hypothesis 3 (that education level correlates positively with educators' emphasis on behavioral-science concepts in teaching) and hypothesis 4 (that PR experience correlates positively with leanings toward management, organizational process and history/ethics).

Regarding hypothesis 3, education correlates with only one role-orientation or teaching-emphasis variable--emphasis on behavioral sciences in teaching. Further, this correlation holds with age and PR experience partialed out.

Put table 5 about here.

Turning to hypothesis 4, total PR experience correlates significantly with emphasis on "decision making," "responsibility," history and ethics, management, and behavioral-science content. Furthermore, these associations hold with level of education partialed out.

Apparently, then, graduate study and professional experience help shape educator perspectives in rather different ways. Interestingly, neither factor correlates with emphasis on journalistic skills. Also, while both corporate and non-profit PR experience tend to correlate

with emphasis on certain facets of education, media experience does not.

Research question 1 deals with breadth of perspective about PR curriculum and emphasis. In general, educators appear to take a rather broad view. Specifically:

1. In table 6, the sample as a whole attaches fairly high importance (mean ratings of at least 3.00 on a 4-point scale) to five diverse topics. These are writing of press releases and other materials, ethics, application of behavioral-science concepts, planning press relations, and overall campaign planning.

Put table 6 about here.

2. In table 7, respondents give mean importance well above the midpoints of the ranges of possible scores on all but one (PR management) of three role-orientation factors, four areas of actual teaching emphasis, and nine ideal education topics.

Put table 7 about here.

3. Table 8 reveals positive associations between orientation toward each role factor (decision-making, communication technician and responsibility) and each factor reflecting an area of actual teaching emphasis. Of course, this could reflect response set to a degree. However, no perspective measured here on PR education leads educators to turn thumbs down on any measured area of curriculum focus. There does not appear to be a division within the field analogous to the oft-discussed "green eye shades vs. chi-squares" dispute alleged to have existed in journalism education as a whole.

Put table 8 about here.

4. In table 9, the "decision-making" or global, management-oriented role orientation appears to go with especially high breadth of perspective. Scores on this factor correlate significantly, and at .20 or higher, with eight of the nine ideal-topic measures. Emphasis on the communication-technician role, on the other hand, achieves comparable correlations with only four of nine ideal-topic areas.

Put table 9 about here.

Summary and Conclusions

In early 1983, a questionnaire was sent to members of the Public Relations Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. A total of 163 responses resulted from two mailings, representing a response rate of 73 percent.

Respondents indicated their orientations toward four roles identified in prior research by Broom and colleagues (Broom, 1982a; Broom, et al., 1982; Broom and Smith, 1979). Also, they reported actual emphasis which they devoted in teaching to 15 topics and emphasis which, ideally, they would place on 10 topic areas gleaned from a previous content analysis of public relations research.

Overall, the communication-technician role, with a focus on writing and producing messages, stood out as quite distinct from other roles. However, the dominant role-orientation factor, called decision-making, combined elements from three previously identified practitioner roles. These were problem-solving process facilitation, communication process facilitation, and expert prescriber.

Also, an exploratory canonical-correlation analysis of role-orientation and ideal-topic items suggested the existence of two communication-technician roles as viewed by educators. First was a narrow position focusing on technical aspects of production but not on writing or liaison (media relations) work. Second, some educators took a broader communication technician view, emphasizing writing, publication production, and media relations while still downplaying broader behavioral-science and management related concerns.

Level of education achieved by respondents correlated with emphasis placed on behavioral science in teaching--but with very little else in the analysis. This had been predicted, based on studies showing heavy behavioral-science emphasis in most graduate programs completed by public relations educators.

Also, experience in public relations correlated with emphasis placed on decision-making; PR management; and PR history, ethics and regulations. Apparently, then, experience in the field leads one into management positions which, not surprisingly, may contribute to a management orientation upon moving into academe.

Overall, educators showed a strong felt need to train generalists for public relations careers. While seen as distinctive, even the communication-technician role-orientation correlated positively with salience accorded to management and the behavioral sciences. In short, there appeared to be no real division among public relations educators akin to the oft-noted "green eye-shades vs. chi-squares" split among journalism professors of some years ago.

TABLE 1

Description of Sample

Education

Have doctorate	55%
Do not have doctorate, but have taken work beyond master's	24%
Have master's degree, no additional work	18%
Have bachelor's degree and have done additional work, without graduate degree	2%
Have bachelor's degree, no additional work	1%
	100%
	(n=163)

Major area of concentration in highest degree earned

Journalism or mass communication	64%
Communication	6%
Speech or interpersonal communication	2%
Organizational communication	1%
Education	7%
Management	2%
Marketing	1%
Law	2%
Sociology	2%
Psychology	2%
English	5%
Political Science	2%
Miscellaneous	3%
	99%
	(n=163)

Membership status vis-a-vis PRSA

Accredited member	33%
Non-accredited member	26%
Non-member	42%
	101%
	(n=144)

TABLE 1 (continued)

Relative emphasis on graduate and undergraduate teaching	
Teach only undergrads	47%
Teach undergrads more than grads, some of each	24%
Teach grads and undergrads with equal emphasis	12%
Teach grads more than undergrads, some of each	4%
Teach only grad students	2%
	99%
	(n=154)
Mean years of journalistic experience, all media	7.1
Mean years of experience as public relations practitioner	
Agency PR	1.0
Corporate PR	2.1
Non-profit PR (including government, military)	4.0
Trade, professional & association PR	0.5
Total PR experience	7.6

Means based on an n of 158 who provided years of experience. Some percentages on a given variable do not sum to 100 because of rounding error.

TABLE 2

Factor analysis of items dealing with emphasis on specific course topics

	Factor 1 (Journa istic skills)	Factor 2 History, ethics, regulation)	Factor 3 (PR management)	Factor 4 (behavioral-science)
PR Writing	.67	.23	-.13	-.05
Film, videotape, other visual media	.62	.17	.27	.05
Brochures, annual reports other PR publications	.71	-.20	.12	-.02
Publication layout, design	.64	-.19	.19	-.03
PR history, philosophy	-.09	.58	.05	.01
PR ethics	.10	.63	.09	.29
PR regulation	.13	.55	.20	.23
Budgeting, financial management	.17	.12	.82	.14
Management of staff,	.05	.11	.58	.28
Survey research methods	.09	.18	.20	.64
Application of behavioral-science concepts	.11	.23	.17	.72
Percentage of common-factor variance accounted for by each factor	50%	29%	13%	7%

Only items used to describe a listed factor are included in this table.

TABLE 3

Factor analysis of items dealing with emphasis respondent places, in own teaching, on preparing students to play various public relations roles

	Factor 1 (Decision-making)	Factor 2 (Communication technician)	Factor 3 (Inform others)	Factor 4 (Responsibility)
Keep management informed of public relations	.67	.06	.25	.23
Point out to management the need to follow a systematic planning process	.70	-.02	.12	.22
Have broad experience and training so others consider one to be organization's expert in solving PR problems	.62	.13	.03	.19
Operate as catalyst in management's decision-making	.77	-.08	.14	.15
Outline alternative approaches for solving problems when working with managers on PR	.63	-.07	.31	.09
Act as organization's expert on diagnosing and solving public relations problems	.77	.00	-.03	.30
Act as a liaison, promoting two-way communication between management and various publics	.68	.22	.31	.06
Act as a problem-solving facilitator, helping management go through defining problems, setting objectives and planning programs in a systematic fashion	.75	.12	.09	.00

TABLE 3 (continued)

	Factor 1 (Decision-making)	Factor 2 (Communication technician)	Factor 3 (Inform others)	Factor 4 (Responsibility)
Write public relations materials presenting information on issues important to the organization	-.03	.69	.08	.07
Handle the technical aspects of producing PR materials	-.05	.73	-.04	.03
Produce brochures, pamphlets and other publications	-.11	.86	-.07	-.05
Maintain media contacts and place press releases	.05	.68	.35	.12
Act as a specialist in writing and producing PR materials	-.02	.90	-.07	-.01
Keep others in the organization informed of what the media report about our organization and important issues	.26	.08	.71	.18
Take responsibility for the success or failure of an organization's public relations programs	.41	.12	.11	.72
Prepare to be held accountable by others in the organization for the success or failure of public relations programs	.34	.06	.21	.66
Percentage of common-factor variance accounted for by each factor	57%	30%	7%	6%

Only items used to describe a listed factor are included in this table.

TABLE 4

Canonical correlation of items in role-orientation indices and ideal-topic ratings vis-a-vis PR education

	Canonical variate no. 1	Canonical variate no. 2
Role-orientation items		
Writing PR materials	-.35	.20
In meetings with management, point out the need to follow a systematic public relations planning process	.01	-.33
Handle the technical aspects of producing public relations materials	.29	.13
Produce brochures, pamphlets and other publications	.06	.46
Operate as a catalyst in management's decision-making	-.40	-.31
Act as a specialist in writing and producing public relations materials	-.68	-.09
Act as a liaison, promoting two-way communication between management and various publics	-.32	.13
Ideal-topic ratings		
Management planning and programming	-.38	-.64
Media uses and techniques	-.61	.52
Research and evaluation	.06	-.31
Canonical correlation	.74	.66
Wilk's lambda	.08	.18
Chi-square	323.2(180 df)	221.4(152 df)
p	<.001	<.001

Only variable which correlate at .25 or more with one of the two canonical variates are listed here.

TABLE 5

Product-moment correlations between background factors (age, education, experience) and emphasis placed on PR roles and on topics in teaching

	Education	Age	Journalistic Experience	Corporate PR Experience	Non-profit PR Experience	Total PR Experience
Role-orientation						
Decision-making	-.02	.24** (.24**)	.06	.16*	.15*	.22** (.22**)
Communication-technician	-.02	.11	.05	.02	.08	.08
Responsibility	-.03	.26** (.26**)	.04	.16*	.11	.18** (.19**)
Areas of teaching emphasis						
Journalistic skills	-.08	.02	.01	.06	.12	.12
PR history, ethics and regulation	.09	.21** (.21**)	.06	.13*	.18*	.21** (.22**)
PR management	-.02	.09	.12	.24**	.14*	.30** (.30**)
Behavioral-science	.24** (.25**)	.03	-.06	.08	.11	.16* (.17*)

All correlations were computed with n's of between 150 and 163. Each coefficient in parentheses is a partial r. Those involving PR experience and age are first-order partial r's with education controlled. Those involving education are second-order partial r's with age and PR experience controlled.

*p<.05
**p<.01

TABLE 6

Emphasis which respondents give, in teaching, to 15 topics

	Mean rating*	Percent reporting high emphasis
Journalistic skills		
Writing of press releases, other PR materials	3.16	42
Film, videotape, and other visual media as PR tools	2.57	12
Brochures, annual reports and other PR publications	2.89	26
Layout and design of publications	2.48	16
PR history, ethics, regulation		
PR history and philosophy	2.78	21
PR ethics	3.36	46
Legal, legislative and regulatory areas relating to PR	2.71	14
Management of PR function		
Budgeting and financial management in PR	2.58	11
Staff management and development (management of human resources)	2.48	14
Behavioral science concepts and skills		
Survey research methods	2.86	26
Application of behavioral-science concepts	3.12	41
Other topics		
Planning press relations	3.14	35
Speaking and interviewing	2.53	13
Overall campaign planning	3.56	65
Electronic technology (satellites, cable TV, teleconferences, etc.), its role and uses in PR	2.37	8

*Ratings on 4-pt. scale with 1=no coverage, 2=low coverage, 3=moderate coverage, 4=high coverage. Sample size was 154 or 155 for computation of each mean or percentage.

TABLE 7

Means and standard deviations for indices of role-orientation, actual teaching topics and areas of ideal emphasis

	Mean rating	Standard deviation	Range of possible scores	Corrected mean
Role-orientations				
Decision-making	43.51	13.23	8-56	43.51
Communication technician	24.93	8.38	5-35	39.88[a]
Responsibility	10.17	3.59	2-14	40.69[b]
Areas of teaching emphasis				
Journalistic skills	10.56	3.52	4-16	10.56
PR history, ethics and regulation	8.42	2.57	3-12	11.22[c]
PR management	4.82	1.82	2-8	9.63[d]
Behavioral-science	5.61	2.05	2-8	11.21[d]
Areas of ideal educational emphasis[e]				
Social context	5.77	1.29	1-7	
Processes within organizations	5.63	1.27	1-7	
Professional and ethical perspectives	6.08	1.12	1-7	
Management planning and programming	5.91	1.26	1-7	
Audiences and target publics	6.33	0.93	1-7	
Strategies of action and message construction	6.38	0.88	1-7	
Media uses and techniques	5.96	1.04	1-7	
Program impact	5.58	1.30	1-7	
Research and evaluation	6.17	1.13	1-7	

[a]Mean was multiplied by 1.6 to assure comparability with mean for decision-making.
[b]Mean was multiplied by 4 to assure comparability with mean for decision-making.
[c]Mean was multiplied by 1.333 to assure comparability with mean for journalistic skills.
[d]Mean was multiplied by 2 to assure comparability with mean for journalistic skills.
[e]Idea-emphasis ratings were all on 7-point scales. No adjustment needed for comparability.

TABLE 8

Product-moment correlations between role-orientation indices and indices of teaching emphasis

	Role-orientation index		
Teaching topic	Decision-making	Communication technician	Responsibility
Journalistic skills	.43	.65	.36
PR history, ethics and regulation	.63	.35	.47
PR management	.53	.24	.32
Behavioral-science	.52	.24	.36

All correlations based on n of between 150 and 163. All are significant at $p<.002$.

TABLE 9

Product-moment correlations between role-orientation indices and ideal ratings on emphasis in PR education

Topic for PR education	Role-orientation: Decision-making	Communication technician	Responsibility
Social context	.36**	.11	.28**
Processes within organizations	.28**	.08	.17*
Professional and ethical perspectives	.22**	.22**	.23**
Management planning and programming	.50**	.13	.37**
Audiences and target publics	.38**	.33**	.23**
Strategies of action and message construction	.24**	.25**	.21**
Media uses and techniques	.16**	.47**	.07
Program impact	.47**	.19**	.39**
Research and evaluation--methods and related issues	.42**	.19**	.30**

All correlations based on n of between 149 and 163.

*p<.05.
**p<.01.

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